CORE CONCEPTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

SECOND EDITION

PUBLIC POLICY AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Reframing Strategies for Preparation, Access, and College Success

EDWARD P. ST. JOHN, NATHAN DAUN-BARNETT, AND KAREN M. MORONSKI-CHAPMAN

ROUTLEDGE

Public Policy and Higher Education

Public Policy and Higher Education provides readers with new ways to analyze complex state policies and offers the tools to examine how policies affect students' access and success in college. Rather than arguing for a single approach, the authors examine how policymakers and higher education administrators can work to inform and influence change within systems of higher education using research-based evidence along with consideration of political and historical values and beliefs. Raising new questions and examining recent developments, this updated edition is an invaluable resource for graduate students, administrators, policymakers, and researchers who seek to learn more about the crucial contexts underlying policy decisions and college access.

Special Features:

- Case Studies—allow readers to examine strategies used by different types of colleges to improve access and retention.
- Reflective Exercises—encourage readers to discuss state and campus context for policy decisions and to think about the strategies used in a state or institution.
- Approachable Explanations—unpack complex public policies and financial strategies for readers who seek understanding of public policy in higher education.
- Research-Based Recommendations—explore how policymakers, higher education administrators, and faculty can work together to improve quality, diversity, and financial stewardship.
- New epilogues and a revised Part III—reexamine themes and encourage critical thinking about inequality and policy change.

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Public Policy and Higher Education

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SERIES EDITOR INTRODUCTION

I have the pleasure of serving, along with Stella Flores and Ed St. John, as a coeditor of the Core Concepts in Higher Education Series, published by Routledge Press. With this series, we are aiming to generate core books that speak to the various themes and courses within the field of higher education. Together, we have worked with a variety of leading authors in higher education to write seminal works that capture the salient issues and growth of our field.

Public Policy in Higher Education: Reframing Strategies for Preparation, Access, and College Success, authored by Edward P. St. John, Nathan Daun-Barnett, and Karen M. Moronski-Chapman, is one of the most important books in the Core Concepts series and is recently updated with new information. St. John and colleagues have written a tremendous book that has become the go-to text for public policy classes and public policy scholars in the field of higher education. They have taken the confusing terrain of public policy and simplified it beautifully for students and professionals alike. This book has become a foundational text.

In the book, the authors suggest that the combination of market approaches and educational accountability schemes implemented by many states, often in disjointed and contradictory ways, undermines states' achievement of their goals. They provide a rich and deeply contextualized overview of federal policy initiatives. Perhaps what we appreciate most about *Public Policy in Higher Education* is the context and development of the ideas presented in the book. The reader understands the history of each issue presented rather than seeing these issues in a vacuum.

One of the many strengths of the book is its bridging of K–12 and higher education policy. This is rarely done and, when it is, is typically not done well. In *Public Policy in Higher Education*, the authors link K–12 and higher education seamlessly for the reader, showing how the important issues connect and build on one another.

St. John and colleagues have written a reflective book that brings the work alive for the reader as he or she tries to make sense of the myriad state and federal policies shaping American higher education. They examine the topic from the macro level to the campus level, helping the reader to understand the immediate and lasting impact of these policies.

Above all, St. John and colleagues root the text in an unwavering commitment to social justice.

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PREFACE

Public Policy and Higher Education encourages scholars in the field of higher education to engage with graduate students in the process of asking critical questions about the course of educational policy in the United State. We encourage readers to reflect on the assumptions they make when they analyze policy discourses within their state systems and at a national level and rethink how government strategies for expanding educational opportunity actually relate to student outcomes. The second edition includes the first two parts of the first edition. Along with adding epilogues to the first two parts, we've added a new Part III, based on reviews by professors who used the book, and developed a clearer pedagogical focus across the volume.

WHAT'S THE SAME AS THE FIRST EDITION

We use the concept of *frameworks* as a way of viewing patterns of practice in government policy on higher education that are influenced by beliefs and historical trends. Policy frameworks function as archetypes or images of the government role. As a society, the United States is in the midst of a shift from the classic liberal democratic model that shaped expansion of access and equalization of postsecondary opportunity in the late-20th century to a market system informed by a more recent convergence of neoliberal and neoconservative ideologies that could undermine equity achieved in earlier decades. Often, researchers and policymakers idealize images of the role of government in higher education policy, but such idealized images are seldom realized in practice (Hossler, Lund, Ramin-Gyurnek, Westfall, & Irish, 1997). Nonetheless, these frameworks merit attention and discussion as means of providing more-explicit and conscious frames for examining alternative policy decisions in states and at the federal level.

In Part I, we examine how federal policy has become a powerful force during the past few decades in shaping and influencing the contexts of and incentives for state policy development and adaptation of K–12 and higher education. The federal government does not control educational systems, but federal policy has a substantial influence on policy development in states and institutions. We explain how federal policies create incentives that influence state and institutional policy decisions. We examine the arguments made about federal policy, the ways research was used to craft policy arguments, and the research that has evaluated the linkages between policy decisions and educational outcomes. Whereas research plays a role in federal policy development, it is not clear whether research findings are used to inform rational decisions or ideological beliefs held by policymakers who shape research and craft arguments for reform.

The chapters in Part I also review the range of federal and state mechanisms that influence higher education institutions. We argue that the frameworks developed in this volume can be applied to a range of substantive policy areas—and, in fact, provide a broad framework for thinking about the government role in the early chapters—but we leave it to readers to judge whether we have achieved this aim. Readers' examinations of the national trends in policies and outcomes, along with summative reviews of research about how policy decisions link to subsequent outcomes, provide the opportunity for readers to make their own judgments. Reading about and discussing policy rationales, strategies in relation to outcomes, and research that links policies and outcomes can build understanding about the alternative approaches to policy development at the federal, state, and institutional levels.

In the illustrative state cases in Part II, we encourage readers to think about how campus policy decisions are influenced by the frameworks that state governments have evolved as they respond to federal incentives and policies promoting the goal of expanding college opportunity. We argue that it is important to examine state educational outcomes in relation to the policies actually implemented within states and to use evidence from research on the linkages between policy decisions and relevant educational outcomes to test assumptions about those linkage structures. We do not assume there are simple solutions to the problems now confronting public systems of higher education. In fact, the case studies underscore the complexity of the problems facing states and the need for thoughtful, well-reasoned approaches to research informed policy creation.

In the case studies section, we have chosen to maintain the cases as they were written in the first edition. As any reader will surely recognize state, social, and political contexts have changed significantly in several of the states and others have emerged as interesting in their own rights. Colorado, for example, was the first state to shift their state funding for higher education to a voucher system. An entire case could be written on the Colorado experience. Georgia was the earliest to adopt a merit aid program as their signature financial aid strategy and the program has experienced significant changes in recently years, due largely to the increasing cost of the program and the inability of lottery receipts to keep pace with the cost of the program. In 2017, New York State created the Excelsior Scholarship to provide a last-dollar tuition guarantee for middle-income families, modeled after Bernie Sanders's vision for free college education as articulated during the 2016 presidential primaries for the Democratic candidates. Tennessee has launched an ambitious plan to make community college education free for every student.

We could have written any number of new cases but in review, we found that the cases presented in the first edition captured certain archetypes of state approaches to education that we believed were representative of state strategies today. Instead of writing new cases, we conclude the case studies section with an Epilogue that revisits the original cases, provides updates to each, and discusses some of the changes we have witnessed since 2011. The state remains the primary driver of education policy in both K–12 and higher education, and the trends we have observed over the past six years situate our national education priorities in a global context.

The intent of the state case studies is to encourage readers to build their skills in analyzing the ways political values, beliefs, and traditions influence policy decisions and adaptations within state systems. The case studies consider some of the ways researchers and state officials have used research evidence about student outcomes related to preparation for, access to, and success in college as they craft and advocate for policy changes. We pose questions for readers about what they have observed about the relationships between policy decisions and outcomes to encourage reflection on and discussion about state policy frameworks.

As readers look across and compare cases, it will become evident that state policies on high school graduation, college admissions, and the financing of higher education have an influence on who attends college and whether there is equal opportunity to attend 4-year institutions within states. It is evident that it is extremely difficult to hold together political coalitions that can sustain comprehensive and cohesive policy frameworks that promote equal opportunity, even when there is a history of success within a state. Indeed, the state cases were selected because collectively they illustrate some of the ways that state policy frameworks have been developed, adapted, and undermined over time. The cases can be used to inform discussion about policy, research, and strategy because of the following:

- Each of the state cases discusses the evolution of policy rationales, along with trends in policy decisions and outcomes related to preparation, enrollment, and degree completion. We encourage readers to use the evidence from the cases to test their own assumptions about the linkages between policies and outcomes.
- The cases examine strategies used by different types of colleges within states—especially 2- and 4-year public institutions—to improve access and retention. Since our ability to consider the role of institutional strategies was constrained by the book's length, we encourage readers to think about the frameworks for institutional action created by state and federal policy frameworks.
- The cases provide information on recent policy developments and encourage researchers to think about how recent decisions may link to future outcomes. Policy issues change in states from year to year, so case studies of the type presented merely provide background for contemporary policy analysis.
- The consideration of how researchers and policymakers in different states have approached puzzling policy problems in the past can help new generations of analysts and advocates to think critically and analytically about the policy problems they confront in their own states.

One of the cases in the original edition, Florida, was cut from the second edition due to space limitations. Merit scholarships, the theme of the case, are widely reported on in the higher education literature.

WHAT'S NEW IN THE SECOND EDITION

For the second edit, we added an epilogue updating trends in policies and outcomes at both the federal and levels. We also wrote a new Part III.

Epilogues

The epilogue for Part I reexamines themes emerging across the chapters to provide a basis for retrospective, critical thought about policy trajectories, and provides updates on policy trends. Our purpose is to encourage critical thought about policy change:

- When do global trends and policy shifts converge to transform the trajectory of policy and practice in higher education in the United State and globally?
- When policy changes, do ideological shift rationales tinker with the existing system without changing the nation's trajectory in education?

The first edition had stated Part I was an argument that trends toward privatization of public colleges, lending-based markets for access, and corporatization of universities as research enterprises were a major shift in the course of American and global higher education. This argument is still central to the book.

When he ran for president in 2008, Barack Obama had acknowledged the new trajectory that had emerged after the Cold War during Ronald Reagan's administration. The update of trends reveals Obama's administration gave social justice advocates hope, his policy did integrate more emphasis on equity (i.e., improve college participation rates for the historically underrepresented), but he did not change the trajectory toward privatization and unequal markets; so, inequality in opportunity increased in enrollment in 4-year colleges by low-income students, especially underrepresented minorities. New policy positions by the Donald Trump administration now threaten equity gains made by the Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Obama administrations. As a consequence, we have seen a rapid increase in inequality in college access that is reminiscent of the gaps we experienced during the Reagan years. After sharing evidence about this view of recent history, we raise new questions for readers.

In the Part II Epilogue, written for this second edition, we examine recent development in the case states. While political ideologies changed in some of the states, especially California and North Carolina, states adapted their policy frameworks to change financial and admissions strategies. State frameworks, like the public higher education institutions within states, are artifacts of history; they can be reshaped by the new political, demographic, and economic forces, but they are ultimately establishments built to weather the shifting winds in the course history.

In the Part II Epilogue, we raise new questions about the stability of state frameworks. Our efforts to label states as "models" provided colorful ways to discuss the history of state cases. However, there were substantial changes in most of the states in the intervening years after we completed our work on the first edition. For example, Indiana substantially altered its college access policy, falling from the lofty status it had gained in the 1990s and early 2000s. In contrast, North Carolina took a dramatic turn in dominate political ideologies—and can hardly be called "progressive" in the sense of public values—however, it has most maintained a course toward social equity. We encourage readers to think about these issues, along with what matters most, in questions at the end of Epilogue II.

A New Part III

The more recent policy and ideology changes in states and at the federal levels gave us reason to rethink our conclusions in the first edition. We still had hope for Obama's capacity for change, but that hope was overly idealistic. The reviewers had good reasons to question our optimism and we took their comments seriously.

We wrote a new set of chapters for Part III of this second edition, but our focus of finding remedies to inequality remain the same. The accelerating privatization and marketization of public higher education constrains fairness in access in a period when universal college preparation has become the norm in states. This policy has been deceptive for low-income families: the policy promoted uplift of high school education to prepare all students for college but, at the same time most low-income families have limited financial access to public 4-year colleges. As federal and state policy analysts ponder strategies to promote degree completion, it is essential to include critical analysis of underlying inequalities. However, the policy puzzle of retention is undoubtedly more complex than the simple notion of pulling policy levers, which pervades discussions of accountability in higher education.

The new chapters in Part III were written to encourage critical thinking about inequality and how it can be mitigated and perhaps remedied. Several of the case states found ways through the puzzle—attaining periods of relative equality in opportunity across income and racial groups—but as the winds of political ideologies shift, so do state policies. Therefore, in Part III we focus on:

- Discerning how political ideologies, policy rationales, and the uses of research in the process of change (Chapter 12). We focus on advocacy within the current system of education because it is unlikely that the systems and institutions will be radically reconfigured so as they promote social justice as their core mission.
- Examining the design and interpretation of policy studies, along with strategies for building knowledge of inequalities and remedies to it (Chapter 13). We encourage readers to engage in policy, using research to inform local discourses on the ways program features and funding strategies link to gaps in educational outcomes.
- Situating research and advocacy in awareness of globalizing forces of technology, economics, and social inequality that so dramatically influence the policy, employment and education opportunities, and managerial practices in academe (Chapter 14).

PEDAGOGICAL DESIGN AND USES OF SECOND EDITION

This second edition, like the first, is designed to be read and discussed in a sequential order. Going through the chapters and discussing questions in the order of the chapters can help readers to build their own understandings, ideology, and change over time. We don't assume we have the answers, but rather encourage critical thought.

The chapters in Part III focus on three learning objectives that run across the volume (see Table 0.1). As authors, we've learned more about the major shifts in federal and states adaptive responses as we've written and revised the book. Many things did change over the period between the first edition and the second. However, in spite of a presidency based in hope for a fairer nation, the aim of the Obama presidency starting in 2008 (see Epilogue I), we as a nation did not change the trajectory of K–12 toward universal college preparation; instead we have effectively maintained unequal opportunity to attend and college 4-year colleges, a path established and entrenched decades earlier.

However, there have been clear glimmers of hope, along with brief, and in some cases sustained, periods of fairness (i.e., equitable across groups), as states have adapted to winds of change in politics, economics, and employment. By periods of fairness, we mean

Table 0.1 Book Organization, Learning Objectives, and Analytic Skills Development

Book Organization *Learning Objectives*	**Part I: National Policy Discourse**	**Part II: Case Studies** ***(analytic skills development)***	**Part III: Policy Studies** ***(analytic skills development)***
Critical thinking about claims regarding progress and equity in progressive and global periods (identify embedded claims)	Change in inner logics for policies on college preparation, access and success; uses of research in rationales for new policies and funding	Historical state frameworks used for K–12 and higher education; adaptive changes in states related to shifts in federal policy (*critical thinking about past and possible future in state and local education*)	Shift in federal education policy altered rationales for citizen rights and responsibilities; university missions in research and teaching; created new contexts for policy research and social action (*Identify ideological assumptions in policy*)
Examine relationships between actual changes in programs and funding in relation to intended and unintended outcomes	Changes in K–12 policy in relation to graduation rates across diverse groups; changes in aid programs in relation to college going and graduation rates by diverse groups	Within-state comparisons of policies for preparation, access, and success and actual outcomes; cross-state comparison of model features and change in outcomes (*analysis of local developments in relation to policy*)	Shift from grand theory to policy studies; systemic assumptions embedded in theory and research methods used in policy studies. (*Critical thinking about theory, systems logic, and methods in design and interpretation of policy studies*)
Interpret research in relation to policy contexts, claims in policy rationales, and intended and unintended outcomes	Use research findings from research studies in relation to the limits of methods used in interpreting findings for policy rationales	Policies being considered in states in relation to future of state model; critical thinking about research questions (*uses of research and models in state and local advocacy*)	Shifts in global, national, state and local contexts, especially increasing educational inequality, as context for research and action (*Understanding engaged scholarship supporting advocacy for social justice*)

moments in time, like the 1980s, when gaps in high school graduation and college participation rates declined sharply and students from all backgrounds had similar chances for educational opportunity. We are not suggesting that these earlier periods were some sort of golden age in education, but they do mark a period in our history when we saw it was possible to reduce opportunity gaps by race and class. It is possible that social justice advocates within institutions and communities can muster and use research evidence to inform policy decisions by states, and both educational and administrative practices within higher education.

With the revisions in the second edition, *Public Policy and Higher Education* becomes an improved resource for pedagogies in the field of higher education. Awareness of policy is vital to practice in student affairs, college teaching, financial management, and many specializations in the field. It turns out that there are many thoughtful ways educators can create and expand educational opportunities for individuals and groups facing seemingly unsurmountable barriers. Our hope is that engaged learning about policy will encourage more responsible professional action in communities, colleges and universities, and state and federal agencies. Working together, using research as a tool, it is possible to make a difference.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book combines three levels of analysis into new frameworks that readers can use to inform and reframe policy decisions in higher education: reviews of policy discourses, reviews of trends in policy and outcomes at the state and federal level, and reviews of research that examines links between policies and outcomes. We encourage researchers and policymakers to think through these multiple levels of policy data problems as they engage in their work. This book would not have been possible without funding from the Ford Foundation for Projects Promoting Equity in Urban and Higher Education at the University of Michigan's National Center for Institutional Diversity. The funding supported development of new policy indicators on racial inequality in higher education as well as extended and refined indicators of changes in policies and outcomes related to access that were developed and used in earlier research projects. Anna Chung, Daniela Pineda, Chiayu Chen, and Krystal Williams collaborated on the development of policy indicators. Phyllis Kreger Stillman provided editorial support throughout the project. We gratefully acknowledge all of this support. Chelsie Hinckley, a graduate student at the University of Buffalo, was especially helpful to us in revising, updating, and writing text for the second edition. We also think Heather Jarrow, our Routledge editor, for her thoughtful guidance on the second edition. The views and interpretations in the book are the authors' and do not represent other organizations, groups, or individuals who provided support for this research.

1

INTRODUCTION

Over the past three decades, radical changes have occurred in public policies that alter the ways in which colleges are financed and students pay for college from a long, progressive tradition in U.S. higher education to a more neoliberal focus on accountability and individual responsibility. A stratified market system of higher education has evolved in most states. The primary sorting criteria in this system are students' abilities and achievements defined by where they attended high school. States have adjusted their educational and school finance strategies by raising the standards for high school graduation, but these policies have not equalized opportunities to prepare for college.

The new high school graduation policies were advocated by reformers such as the National Governors Association (Conklin & Curran, 2005), the Gates Foundation (Hoffman, Vargas, Venezia, & Miller, 2007), and various other national groups (Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, 2007; U.S. Department of Education, 2006). The new high school polices have been accompanied by market approaches in urban schools (i.e., charters, vouchers, and so forth) that create systems where students make choices of career fields and possible college majors as early as middle school (St. John, Bigelow, Lijana, & Mass Masse, 2015).

The market policies in higher education, institutionalized in the 1970s with federal need-based, portable grants, were developed based on arguments that free markets improve quality, increase innovation, and reduce costs (e.g., M. Friedman, 1962; Newman, 1971). We suggest in this text that the combination of market approaches and educational accountability schemes implemented by many states, often in disjointed and contradictory ways, undermine states' achievement of these goals.

While the federal government sets the directions for educational change through financial incentives, states maintain legal authority for public systems and are responsible for establishing policy frameworks—education and finance policies—that guide development of education systems and expand educational opportunities for their citizens. This disjunction between federal policy and state strategies is one of many problems facing educational reform in the 21st century. State policy frameworks are developed within belief and value systems about education and government held by politicians, analysts, and citizens. Even when public officials think through how various K–12 and higher education policies interrelate, failure to adhere to these frameworks in annual budgeting can undermine their intent, especially as economic conditions and political ideologies change.

Many economists have studied market forces in higher education, but the shift in underlying policy frameworks has gone largely unstudied in economics or higher education. There have been strong rational arguments for market models of public finance in higher education since the middle 1960s (e.g., T. L. Freidman, 1962; Hansen & Weisbrod, 1969; Hearn & Andersen, 1995; Hossler, Lund, Ramin-Gyurnek, Westfall, & Irish, 1997). However, new ways of thinking have developed within states as they have adapted to new political ideologies and financial incentives, what we refer to as *state policy frameworks*, which have not been studied as such. Unfortunately, these frameworks are often disjointed and contain contradictory requirements, making it difficult for educators and students to achieve their aims. Policy frameworks are often aligned with political ideologies and beliefs that change over time, but sometimes a state can adhere to an old framework because of tradition long after it has lost functionality. Regardless of the type of framework states use, the interface between K–12 and higher education systems too often is not seamless, and creates barriers for students and their families due to financial and structural inequalities perpetuated within educational systems (St. John, Hu, & Fisher, 2011; St. John & Musoba, 2010). Yet it is possible to develop comprehensive and cohesive policy frameworks in states that expand opportunities for their citizens to find educational pathways that work.

Although individual policies are frequently studied and evaluated, the logic of frameworks that link policies within states is seldom reviewed, evaluated, revised, or redefined. Typically, new laws, standards, and funding schemes emerge in response to new federal initiatives with little collective discourse within states—or even at the federal level—about the implications for a state's K–16 system, or the cohesiveness of pathways through educational systems. The federal Race to the Top competition provides a useful illustration of the challenges we face. In 2009, President Obama signed into law the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) as a comprehensive strategy to address the recessionary challenges facing the United States. Part of this initiative was the creation of a $4.35 billion grant fund to incentivize states to adopt a set of neoliberal policy priorities, including college and career readiness standards, expanded opportunities for school choice, data-informed decision making, and teacher accountability (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). The winners were the states that most successfully adopted the slate of policy preferences articulated by the Department of Education. There was no expectation that states develop an integrated statewide strategy tailored to the unique political climate of the state or the unique features of the respective education systems. Rather, states were evaluated on the degree to which they met the federal priorities; hundreds of millions of dollars were awarded to 12 states over the first two phases of the competition.

Further, the economic and social contexts within states are subject to frequent and sudden changes. For example, through most of the early 20th century, California's policy framework for high school preparation and college opportunity was unequaled (e.g., Kerr, 1963), but it has fallen from this lofty position in recent decades. In the current context of federal policy and global competition in the labor market, it is important for state and campus leaders to consider forces at work when planning and leading efforts to expand opportunity, the prevailing educational goal in nearly every state across the country.

FEDERAL AND STATE POLICY FRAMEWORKS

Whereas federal market strategies have overtly emphasized innovation, efficiency, and quality in recent decades, implementation of federal policies has fallen short of intent, since tax constraints and political attitudes shift before new policies are fully implemented. There is also great variability in the ways market-oriented policies have been implemented across and within state systems of higher education and local high school systems. Reform strategies originated by one state (e.g., Georgia's HOPE Scholarship or Indiana's 21st Century Scholars) are adapted by other states, just as innovations by colleges (e.g., learning communities) are adapted by other campuses. A body of research has examined the patterns of diffusion of educational policy innovations across states and identified a number of factors related to adoption (Doyle, 2006; McLendon, Hearn, & Deaton, 2006), but very little of this work examines whether, or the extent to which, states adapt these strategies to the existing state context. Constraints on tax revenue and diversity in state frameworks (i.e., public attitudes and policy traditions) make it necessary to alter policies as models are adapted and altered through implementation. The variations in state markets should be of concern to educators, policymakers, and citizens within states because both the educational opportunities for citizens and constraints on strategy adoption by institutions are inexorably linked to and altered by state contexts.[1] Our core argument is that strategies for improving college access and reducing inequality must be adapted to state policy contexts because of the following:

- The shift from human capital to market theories as the underlying framework of education policy changes education in fundamental ways.
- High school graduation standards shape both patterns of high school dropout and the extent of college preparation but not necessarily the quality of preparation.
- State grant programs—merit- and need-based aid—influence student expectations about college choices during high school as well as the ability of low- and middle-income families to pay for different types of colleges within their states.
- Colleges craft financial aid packages to promote academic success within the constraints of federal and state student aid.
- Institutional strategies for improving academic success during college must be aligned with the preparation of students.

From Human Capital Theory to Market Models

During the last half of the 20th century, education policy was typically taught within a human capital framework. Human capital theory argued that both governments and individuals made decisions about education based on expected economic and human (individual and social) returns (Becker, 1964). The economic returns from education spending were seldom evaluated, but studies that did so raised doubts about prevailing policy (e.g., Hansen & Weisbrod, 1967). The federal government published reports recommending that states use manpower needs to guide decisions about which types of colleges and programs to build and support (Halstead, 1974). During the same period, international studies of higher education systems typically used human capital frameworks (e.g., Kerr, 1978). However, by the early 1970s market logic had begun to have a substantial influence on education policy.

The Newman Commission (1971), a study group for the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW), recommended portable grants as a means of equalizing opportunity and stimulating innovation, and soon a panel of economists made similar recommendations (Committee on Economic Development, 1973). Research by the National Commission on the Financing of Postsecondary Education (1973) confirmed that student aid had a more substantial influence on enrollment than direct institutional funding. These early studies influenced the general acceptance of market approaches to higher education funding at the federal level, a strategy that was rationalized in arguments about equal opportunity (Gladieux & Wolanin, 1976). The Pell grant program, introduced as Basic Educational Opportunity Grants (BEOGs) in 1972, adapted the human capital arguments to claim that portable, need-based aid could equalize educational access, and it is now the largest federally sponsored market-based policy for postsecondary opportunity.[2]

The grant-based system of need-based aid lasted for only a short period. In higher education, research showing that individuals benefit economically from education (e.g., Leslie & Brinkman, 1988) has been used to argue for loans rather than grants as the primary means of providing student aid (Bennett, 1986, 1987). Arguments for educational vouchers in K–12 education had been made in the 1960s (M. Freidman, 1962), but it took several decades for these arguments to take hold. Both public and private vouchers were tried in the 1990s, but research on their impact was ambiguous, as was the research on charter schools (e.g., Witte, 2000). In K–12 education, market adaption occurred through development of charter schools to compete with public systems, but vouchers never gained sufficient evidence-informed political support. Parents who can afford to do so vote with their feet and choose to live in communities with high-performing schools. These patterns accelerated in the second half of the 20th century, particularly in response to federal and state desegregation efforts.

When economists assess and evaluate market policies in higher education, they frequently assume that equal opportunity exists in K–12 education (Lleras, 2004); if this assumption were not made, it would be extremely difficult for them to estimate the impact of market-based reforms in college aid, even when randomized experiments were used. Yet, economists have also uncovered some of the problems with the application of market theory in education. Early econometric studies of the impact of Pell grants found that constraints on academic preparation in high school limited college choices for new enrollees in community colleges and proprietary schools (Manksi & Wise, 1983). Analyses of the impact of costs, even causal analyses, are biased in ways that cannot easily be corrected without considering differentials in prior preparation. Instead of considering market barriers, much of the education research community blames schools and students for failures.

There have been only a few actual experiments studying vouchers and other market mechanisms. Findings indicate that these models have not reduced inequalities in access to quality education. Research using experiments with random assignment has shown repeatedly that state and local attempts to equalize educational opportunities have mostly failed: school quality and access to the best schools remain unequal, even when there are modest gains in parents' perceived satisfaction (Metcalf & Paul, 2006;

Witte, 1998, 2000). Thus, the association between state policies and inequality in education markets merits closer study, not because we should do away with markets, but rather so we can find better ways to reduce inequalities given the prevalence of market mechanisms in education.

Markets are not only part of the problem with inequality, they can also be part of the solution if the appropriate mechanisms—and necessary funding—are put into place to promote greater fairness.

States infrequently consider the role of their market-oriented policies in contributing to or undermining equal opportunity in education; indeed, the linkages between market forces and fairness are poorly understood in state governments. For nearly a century, K–12 education was compulsory and appropriately considered a basic right; higher education was generally available and heavily subsidized by the public. The general subsidies to public universities in the first half of the 20th century mostly benefited middle- and upper-income families, who had greater access (Hansen & Weisbord, 1969). Contemporary market models evolved as a result of shifts in political ideologies and funding constraints without strong empirical evidence to support new policies and without effective evaluation strategies to assess the impact of the policies. Yet, there was brief period of relative equality across racial/ethnic groups in the opportunity to enroll in college, as historic inequalities in college access were largely remedied by federal court decisions calling for desegregation, and the implementation of Pell grants in the 1970s (St. John, 2003).[3] Despite that brief period of success in terms of access, there has never been equality across racial/ethnic groups in rates of degree attainment.

By the late 1980s, the federal government had shifted its focus from equalizing opportunity in preparation and college opportunity to emphasizing improvement in educational outcomes and equal treatment for all students (Finn, 1990a), a strategy that continues. During the same period, the federal government shifted aid strategies from emphasizing need-based grants to relying primarily on loans (Hearn & Holdsworth, 2004). Although the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) included new federal spending on education, most of it was short-term stimulus funding, rather than a long-term reinvestment, used to reward states that adopted the range of federal policy priorities for education. Subsequent budget deals have gutted much of the new investment in education that had been included in the stimulus. Thus, it is up to the states to figure out how to equalize educational preparation under the new market conditions. Most states have constitutions that emphasize equal opportunity, yet they have failed to adapt their new market approaches to increase fairness, so greater inequalities have emerged.

The Eroding Dream

When Martin Luther King Jr. originally made his “I Have a Dream” speech in 1963, the federal courts were actively considering cases on school desegregation. The federal government was nearing the starting point of programs promoting equal educational opportunity in K–12 and higher education, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) and the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA). At the time, states were responsible for funding both K–12 and higher education, and there had been some court cases requiring states to equalize funding for higher education. ESEA Title I provided supplemental funding for compensatory education for low-income students, and HEA Title IV funded national need-based grant and loan programs. These policies set the United States on a trajectory toward improving equity in education, at least for a brief period.[4]

There are two principles of educational opportunity that most citizens of the United States would agree are important for all: access to a quality K–12 education, what we call the *implied promise of fairness* in education for all, and *equal opportunity* to achieve a college education.[5] States have an obligation to provide a basic education to all, a commitment that is necessary because of the requirement for mandatory schooling. If the implied promise is broken for some students because of the failure of the state to provide an adequate basic education, then these early inequalities require attention and adjustment by public colleges and universities if higher education is to play its role in promoting equal education opportunity. In other words, to the extent that colleges are public institutions, they are an extension of their states and have the obligation to promote fairness.[6]

In addition, it is incumbent on government to balance *the promise* of fair opportunity to prepare and *equal opportunity* to enroll in higher education, once given such preparation, with a distribution of tax dollars through means that ensure cross-generational uplift.[7] Failure to provide taxpayer support would lead to a highly elite system of education, with little opportunity for uplift across generations.

The ways governments choose to structure and finance education has changed over time. In the mid-1900s, public education was subsidized by states, but access was unequal. After first tackling the problem of segregation in K–12 education after *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), the federal government focused on expanding opportunity for K–12 education and equalizing opportunity to enroll in higher education, providing supplemental programs and funding through the ESEA and the HEA. Both conditions—the promise of quality K–12 schools and equal opportunity for higher education—were largely achieved for a brief period in the 1970s (St. John, 2003). Compensatory education, delivered through the ESEA, created some fairness in preparing for higher education; federal student aid programs based on need equalized opportunities for college enrollment. The helping hand of the federal government aided fairness in K–12 education and equality in college access in the 1960s and 1970s, but the underlying framework of federal education policy shifted to a quasi-market model that did not have this same emphasis on equalizing opportunity, a change in policy that we consider in Part I.

The election of President Ronald Reagan ushered in a new era in education policy. Although Reagan was aligned with a neoconservative anti-tax, anti-entitlement philosophy (Drury, 1997), his presidency has been widely recognized as the turning point in educational policy in the shift to neoliberalism (e.g., Harvey, 2005). Careful study of presidential speeches (Posselt, 2009) shows that the roots of these "new" visions were established earlier: first by President Richard Nixon, who promoted markets with the introduction of Pell grants; and then by President Jimmy Carter, who tried to cut the costs of government aid and shifted Pell from a low-income program to one giving all students access to grants and loans by removing the income cap—a change that had an almost immediate impact on the expansion of inequality. So, although the neoliberal era ushered in by Reagan may have accelerated the change in trajectory, the underlying ideas were already established in the policy and ideologies of the Democratic and Republican presidents who preceded him.

The ideological shifts in American culture and politics are important to the study of higher education policy because of their influence on public finance, government regulation, and curriculum. *Neoliberalism* is appropriately characterized as valuing freedom of choice over equal rights (Harvey, 2005), whereas *neoconservatism* is ideologically opposed to using tax dollars to provide support for need-based entitlements (Drury, 1997). However, general entitlements for all (e.g., vouchers) remain a public policy priority, but this method could not equalize opportunity without supplemental funding for low-income families because of their financial need. Without an even hand of government to ensure equity, unfettered, privatized markets are especially detrimental to equal opportunity in education or health.

In contrast, liberalism values equal opportunity, which predisposes proponents toward need-based aid and other programs that equalize opportunity for education, health care, and so forth. The national trajectory shifted from a sustained period of movement toward liberal social programs from the Great Depression through the 1970s to the neoliberal period that emerged full scale in the 1980s. Neoconservative arguments about great books and the humanities (e.g., Bloom, 1987) had received substantial attention and added to the critique of higher education (Drury, 1997).

Much as *A Nation at Risk* (U.S. Department of Education, 1983) critiqued liberal education reforms and started a trajectory toward central control of curriculum and standards (Ravitch, 2010), the critiques of liberal higher education financial aid policies levied by Secretary of Education William Bennett and his leadership team, suggesting that universities raise tuition to increase revenues for loans (Bennett, 1986, 1987; Carnes, 1987; Finn, 1988a, 1988b), were made during a period when federal aid was shifting from an emphasis on need-based Pell grants to student loans (Hearn & Holdsworth, 2004; St. John, 1994a, 2003).

Since the early 1980s there has been a troubling reliance on the market model, with inadequate federal investment in need-based grants and an overemphasis on loans for low- and middle-income students. In this volume, we explore how the global transition—the internationalization of labor and international competition among universities (St. John, 2013)—coincide with a new set of conditions in higher education and encourage readers to reflect on the course of public policy in higher education.

We summarize the shifts in political ideologies and their manifestations in Table 1.1. We conclude that during the global period there has been a break in the implicit social contract framed by human capital theory, which guided higher education finance for

Table 1.1 Changes in Political Ideologies Influencing Higher Education

Period	Political Ideologies	Values	Higher Education
Progressive century	Conservative	• Economic development • Low taxes	• Classical education • Science and technology, discovery promoting economic growth
	Liberal	• Social progress • Cross-generation uplift	• Education for justice and social good • Equal opportunity
Global period	Neoconservative	• Cut social programs • Reduce taxes	• STEM pipeline • Merit aid • Corporatization of science
	Neoliberal	• Markets and efficiency • Universal human rights	• Fill gaps in STEM pipeline • Equalize preparation requirements

nearly a half-century (Rawls, 1971) from the end of the Great Depression through the end of the Cold War. Rather than being perceived as an investment, with returns to society in the form of educated workers who "pay back" society in taxes on income gains and through economic gains in science, spending on higher education has been aligned with narrower rationales related to the advancement and commercialization of science (Powers & St. John, 2017; Priest & St. John, 2006; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). In this new age, it has been much more difficult for advocates of equal opportunity to build support for need-based student aid as a means of equalizing higher education opportunity.

States' Responses to the Federal Market Model

In Part I we examine the general pattern of how states have responded to the market model of federal student aid, the policy trends raising educational standards for graduation, and the privatization of public colleges that have corresponded with unequal representation and a growing racial and economic gap in completion rates in 4-year colleges. However, the correspondence between the emergence of market policies based on federal loans and expanding privatization of public colleges after 1980 are not the sole cause of increased inequality because states are the primary source of support for higher education; but this federal market creates the policy context in which states and institutions adapt their financial policies. A few states have been exceptions to the general pattern of growing inequality, illustrating the potential for comprehensive strategies to deliver on the promise of equal opportunity. The roles of state policies on student financial aid and high school reform both merit attention when considering issues related to equal opportunity.

The shift in who pays the cost of attending a public college from taxpayers to students and their families contributed to inequalities in preparation, access, and college success in most states. In many cases, this shift is the consequence of market-oriented policies that are either poorly structured or fail to address longer-term implications. For example, only a few states have a history of linking funding for state need-based grants to tuition charges. Under the best of circumstances, these awards lose their purchasing power simply because tuition and fees rise, and grants do not. Unfortunately, there has been a tendency to cut all higher education budgets at the same time, which simultaneously leads to increased tuition and decreased grants—meaning that the shifting burden of cost to parents and students is accelerated. The correspondence between trends in two indicators during the 1990s and early 2000s (St. John, 2006; St. John, Williams, & Moronski, 2010)—the fall college continuation rate for spring high school graduates, and the ratio of public tuition and the average state funding for need-based grants[8]—confirms a relationship between state efforts to maintain grant aid and the rate of initial enrollment. During most of the period, the link was tight: when the percentage of costs covered by students increased, continuation rates declined, and vice versa. The tight link between these two indicators broke down in the late 2000s, a development that appears to be related to the impact of high school reforms.

Changes in state requirements for high school graduation also influence both overall opportunity and whether there is equity across income and racial/ethnic groups in access to different types of opportunities. During the past two decades, all states adopted new math standards, as advocated by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) (2000), most raised graduation requirements for math and other subjects, and some implemented exit exams for graduation (Daun-Barnett & St. John, 2012; St. John, 2006). These policies are important relative to higher education because:

- A period of decline in high school graduation rates usually follows implementation of higher graduation standards (a pattern for which there is evidence, as reviewed in Chapter 4);
- The extent and speed of recovery in graduation rates after implementation of new graduation requirements is dependent on the supply of teachers prepared to teach the advanced subjects required and the attention paid to the organizational and cultural aspects of school change (a topic that should be further studied);
- The ability of colleges to craft bridge programs and academic support apparatus builds upon prior preparation of students (a topic of increasing interest to policy researchers).

Typically, the new standards for curriculum were used in public schools in most states, but charter schools were exempt in most states. Thus, while charter schools brought a new type of K–12 market to public education, there were substantial differences in the academic freedom between district schools and charter schools in most urban districts (St. John, Bigelow, Ligina, & Masse, 2015). At the outset of the charter movement, these new quasi-public schools were exempted from state requirements,[9] but increasingly states apply the same graduation requirements and testing to both public and quasi-public schools. Federal policy now promotes charter schools and other small schools as an alternative to public schools, creating parallel systems within most urban school districts. A few well-funded charters have gained public attention, but, overall, charters do no better at graduating students or improving test scores than do public schools (Eckes & Rapp, 2006, 2007; Ravitch, 2010).

Charter and public schools now face similar challenges in urban areas. Both types of schools compete for teachers and students and struggle to upgrade curriculum, although charters may have an advantage because they can attract money from foundations and other sources to develop new curriculums, while public schools have a uniform curriculum. However, the problems that underlie implementation of the new standards involve more than selecting and implementing a curriculum or hiring teachers. The methods used to teach advanced math and other subjects are not engaging to all students and, whereas high failure rates were acceptable in the past, increased graduation requirements force schools to increase achievement.

The Critical Importance of Sustained, Comprehensive Strategies

Reducing inequality in preparation, access, and college success is a complicated process for states. State policies on school and college funding originally developed prior to and independent of the early federal efforts to reduce inequality through student financial aid (HEA Title IV) and compensatory education (ESEA Title I) in 1965. They also developed independently of one another, which, during periods of declining state revenues, has the effect of pitting one system in competition against the other for scarce resources. Over the decades, as the focus of federal policy shifted to a market model, some states accelerated privatization (i.e., shifting the costs of college from taxpayers to students and their families). By the 2000s, the federal market model in higher education emphasized loans, and the federal emphasis in K–12 education introduced quasi-public schools that competed with public schools under different constraints and incentives.[10]

In the 21st-century policy context, state education and finance policy decisions should recognize the consequences of each policy on the competing public, private, and proprietary systems of higher education and the public, quasi-public, and private systems that compete in K–12 education.[11] Typically, state policies on higher education, high schools, and public finance are not well coordinated. This disjointed policy environment was further undermined by efforts to improve accountability as a mandate for retaining federal student aid—a systematic approach that forces reporting schemes, alignment of curriculums, and tests. An unfortunate reality that goes largely unnoticed is that international benchmarks rating U.S. education were lower in the 2000s (U.S. Department of Education, 2006) than in 1983 when *A Nation at Risk* was published (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). Three decades of accountability schemes implemented within market environments have influenced education in unintended ways: the quality of public schools and the percentage of students graduating from high school declined, as did college degree completion (Bowen, Chingos, & McPherson, 2009).

In these conditions, states are left to create coordinated approaches that combine academic and financial strategies in coherent ways to *make sure market and accountability strategies work as intended*. But do they? Unfortunately, they usually do not. We conclude that a comprehensive, coherent approach that coordinates diverse strategies in ways that allow schools and colleges to compete for students is the most workable approach in the policy context of the early 21st century. We reach these conclusions based on research (e.g., St. John, Hu, & Fisher, 2011; St. John & Musoba, 2010) coupled with the analysis of state models in Part II.

States selected for case studies represent models worth careful study. However, this is a convenience sample in the sense that we worked with policymakers in many of these states on analyses reported in the case studies. Only the Michigan and California cases were developed independent of collaboration with state officials; they were chosen because they include distinct features and policy priorities that merit attention in other states. California provides an example of the low-tuition, high-grant model; Minnesota provides an example of the high-tuition/high-grant model; and Michigan provides an example of high tuition and low grants that in many ways embodies the neoliberal ideology (Chapter 10). North Carolina provides a case that runs counter to recent trends: increased public investment in colleges and their students in spite of the difficult economic conditions of the early 2000s (Chapter 11). In combination, these cases provide a view of a diverse range of state strategies, allowing comparisons of different approaches. As part of each case, we consider how different types of institutions have adapted as state policies changed in the late 1990s and early 2000s, the time period studied. We provide evidence that will help readers assess how well campus and state strategies work along three dimensions—improving quality (academic outcomes), maintaining diversity, and reducing achievement gaps (a measure of equity within systems)—while also meeting demand at a fair cost for taxpayers and families who pay full costs. It has been extremely difficult for states to maintain integrated models and a workable approach, given the economic volatility in states combined with shifts in federal policies and funding.

There was evidence in several state cases of policymakers using research as feedback to modify, adapt, and refine government policy and campus strategies. In some states, research played a role in shaping and sustaining strategy: California has been a subject of study for decades (Hansen & Weisbrod, 1967, 1969; Smelser & Almond, 1974), Minnesota became a national model in the 1980s (Hearn & Anderson, 1989, 1995; Hearn & Longanecker, 1985), and Indiana has more recently emerged as a model (St. John, Hu, & Weber, 2000, 2001; St. John & Musoba, 2010). However, all of the states are susceptible to the vagaries of the tenuous national and global economies.

The fact is that campuses and states are challenged by new conditions that require alternative strategies for developing P–16 education policy. In Part III we discuss ways in which policymakers, campus administrators, and faculty can work together to improve quality, diversity, and financial stewardship. For the past few decades, government agencies have been responding to taxpayer concerns about the costs of the public sector of the economy. At the same time, public, private, and proprietary colleges continue to be dedicated to raising and spending money (H. R. Bowen, 1980; Hossler, 2004).

POLITICAL SHIFTS AND POLICY ANALYSIS

As the evolution of policies and policy rationales outlined above illustrates, most policymakers and researchers treat their beliefs about the goals of public policy as though they were true, seldom subjecting them to research evidence and open debate. However, there are vastly differing political views on the role of education, the value of providing access to it, and whether the government should be responsible for funding education, and, if so, how to go about it. Part II uses case studies to focus on the political aspects of policy decisions in states as an integral part of state policy frameworks. Next, we introduce our approach to discussing political views or frames of policy decisions. We consider the role of both political ideologies and analytic approaches, two key components of framing and rationalizing policy decisions.

Political Shifts

The classic liberal and conservative arguments are placed in a historical perspective and used to describe the current ideological clash about education and educational finance and the post progressive stance used in the book. Our aim is to provide the facts in ways that are open to interpretation without taking a stance on how strategies will link to outcomes. Instead, we examine assumptions about the benefits of markets and recognize the importance of improving quality and economic productivity as well as equity. Although economic theories of human capital and markets had a substantial influence on education policy in the 20th century, these arguments were not the basis for early public investments in education.

Placing Recent Trends in Their Historical Contexts

Much of the current debate about education policy is framed within a clash between conservative and liberal values. For example, many conservatives believe that markets provide opportunities for innovation and improve excellence for all (e.g., Finn, Manno, & Vanourek, 2000), whereas many liberals argue that the role of government should be to equalize opportunity (e.g., Oakes, 1985), the ideology that shaped the ESEA and the HEA in the 1960s and 1970s. When these frames are used, the debates about educational systems, funding, and policies are often framed as either/or dialectics. Although we agree that there are radically different values among those on the political right and left, we also recognize the need to elevate political discourse above ideological clashes. It may help to take a step back and consider contemporary education policy in a historical context.

The history of education, as typically portrayed, is framed within the values of the Enlightenment. It is important to recognize that the emergence of the modern nation state, and later our democratic form of national government, grew out of the accumulated wealth of nations and the shift in theological logic about human rights (Fogel, 2000; Polyani, 2001; Taylor, 2007). The creation of schools and colleges in the early colonies set the trajectory of education in the United States before public education as we now know it emerged (Reese, 2005; Thelin, 2004a). Higher education institutions were founded as the nation moved westward during the colonial period and afterward. Most states and territories had high schools, academies, and colleges of various types, often with little distinction among them (Thelin, 2004a). Professional education in business and medicine took place in private proprietary schools, as public and private colleges focused mostly on the liberal arts. Most colleges were aligned with faith traditions, and their presidents were usually members of the clergy.

Faith traditions were central to curriculum in early American schools and colleges during the colonial period and the nation's first century (Marsden, 1994; Taylor, 2007). The faith-based orientation of colleges began to change in the late 1800s, but progress toward this secular notion of education and liberal arts occurred gradually after the creation of public education (Reese, 2005). Although some states had created public universities before the Civil War, the Land Grant Act of 1865 set up a framework for all states to create public universities (Jencks & Riesman, 1968; Kerr, 1963).

A general state policy framework, or ethos, emerged that public universities should be accessible to all who qualified. Recently, in a historical discussion of the public role in higher education appended to *Crossing the Finish Line* (Bowen, Chingos, & McPherson, 2009, p. 240), Eugene Tobin argued:

> America's public flagship universities were created to meet the social and economic development of the states that chartered them, to serve as the great equalizer and preserver of an open, upwardly mobile society to provide "an uncommon education for the common man." Any resident, regardless of socioeconomic status, who fulfilled a standard set of academic requirements, would, in theory, be admitted to one of the state's public higher education institutions. In principle, the flagship university of the late 19th and early 20th century was an institution that served everybody, but in an era when few people completed high school (and many who did pursued non-college proprietary curriculum), the notion of the "people's university" was more of a symbol than a reality.

This description of early American public universities captures the ideology of social *and* economic development, the core values of the progressive trajectory in American education during the century ending in the 1980s (St. John & Parsons, 2004), after which the core value became economic rather than social development. The Wisconsin Idea[12] and the growth in the belief that the boundaries of the University of Wisconsin were the boundaries of the state embodied this progressive expectation for higher education at the turn of the 20th century (Wisconsin Higher Education Business Roundtable, n.d.).

Public high school systems developed after public universities. The public school movement, a process that converted Protestant schools into public schools, began in earnest in the 1880s (Reese, 2005). High schools were slow to develop, and when they became generally available they followed a comprehensive pattern, providing vocational, liberal arts, and college preparatory education. The evolution of the comprehensive high school was largely a consequence of two developments through the early part of the 20th century. First, by 1918, every state in the nation had passed laws both curtailing child labor and providing compulsory education, with states responsible for providing that education (Cook, 1912; Deutsch, 1917; Resnick & Resnick, 1985). Second, historians of the comprehensive high school (Hammack, 2004; Krug, 1964; Wraga, 1994) typically trace its origins back to the Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education (Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education, 1918), because it delineated very clearly a new vision for a broader, more accessible, and practical/vocational curriculum for the masses. The Catholic schools, which resisted the Protestant-centric curriculum of early "public" schools, developed college preparatory high schools (Gleason, 1995). The current struggles to transform public high schools into college preparatory schools involves changing deeply embedded cultures, not only of schools but also of the working-class communities in which many are situated.

These efforts come in a new historical period. The emergence of the global period is every bit as world changing as the early period of nation building. After the end of the Cold War, corporations rapidly internationalized, creating a radically different context for public policy (T. L. Friedman, 2005; Stiglitz, 2002). In higher education, the movement toward market systems and loans is global although not universal (Henry, Lingard, Rizvi, & Taylor, 2001).

Clashing Political Ideologies

The new global ideology is neoliberal, valuing individual rights over the social good (Harvey, 2005), which is why markets are valued so consistently across the political spectrum. In the progressive period in U.S. education, from the end of the Civil War to the end of the Cold War, conservatives argued for education as an instrument for economic development, while liberals argued for social class uplift (St. John & Parsons, 2004). The older economic arguments about human capital supported both social and economic views of investing in education. The new market period is different, not only because of the focus on individual economic returns, but also because of the interpretation of rights and freedom to choose that underlie the newer market strategies. For more than three decades, arguments about individual choice and economic development have prevailed in debates about education, rather than arguments based on the common good and equal educational opportunity.

It has been a complicated period for the old liberal goal of social uplift of more people into the middle class, for which education was seen as the vehicle. Attempts to expand funding for public education and student aid have often not been successful at the federal level, whether national debt was growing, as in the 1980s and 2000s, or shrinking, as it did in the 1990s. The challenge has been how to merge the philosophies of markets and individual freedoms with attempts to expand the middle class. It is possible that new economic arguments about the workforce (Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, 2007), markets, and educational opportunity will merge into a new progressive rationale for reinvestment in education. There is some evidence of this, especially in southern states. The Obama administration argued for reinvestment in education and substantially increased funding for education in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). Billions of dollars were distributed to states for higher education and to fund innovations in urban and rural high school education. Yet questions remain about whether the reinvestment in education can be sustained, given growing government debt in the United States.

Post-Progressive Stance

We take a post-progressive stance in this book.[13] We recognize that inequality within nations and in access to education have grown during this period of globalization, and financial and environmental conditions make it difficult to sustain investments designed to reduce inequality in education. Environmental decline is also a serious global problem.

The neoliberal emphasis on individual rights, which favors consumption and the concentration of wealth, makes it difficult for any government to sustain commitments to equal education or environmental improvement.

In the post-progressive period, we argue, improvement in quality and equity can be achieved through state policy priorities, but it is first necessary to discern how individual policies relate to outcomes and then to refine policies as part of an iterative process of change. If we assume that any specific set of policies will result in equalizing opportunities, then we will miss the opportunity to craft new strategies that may work better. In short, we advocate thorough, systematic experimentation in education policy, where the states are laboratories and the education research community provides scientific evidence to influence the reformulation of integrated policy strategies. The case studies presented in Part II illustrate that a combination of policies will work in different ways over time in different settings, depending on circumstances. Those who value equal opportunity in higher education and study financial aid tend to argue for need-based student aid (Bowen et al., 2009; McPherson & Schapiro, 1991, 1998; St. John, 2003).

We encourage readers to step back from the debates about specific strategies and focus on how combinations of strategies already in place within states are working. It is difficult to hold together a political coalition to support a policy approach, but there are ways to do it. For example, Indiana increased its investment in need-based aid in the 1990s and 2000s but included merit features in the grant program, an approach that had the support of conservatives in the state (Indiana Case: Part II). The state provided higher basic grants to students with honors and college preparatory diplomas than to students with regular diplomas. From an old liberal vantage, the compromise was troubling because it penalized students who were tracked out of these courses, generally including higher numbers of low-income, underrepresented students. Yet the strategy also provided incentives for students to take advantage of advanced preparatory courses, which all high schools were required to offer.

We encourage readers to ponder the problem of building and holding together a consensus, consider evidence about the relationships between policies and outcomes, and reach informed judgments about political positions and policy arguments. We recognize and encourage advocacy within education systems, but we also encourage openness about strategies and outcomes. The evidence from state cases in Part II illustrates that states adopt very different strategies for the improvement of education and for higher education finance, in part as a result of the political histories of their states. Further, to maximize the impact of funding and education resources, universities must craft strategies with knowledge of the ways in which state policy actually works rather than what worked in a campus in another state with a different policy context.

Policy Analysis and Interpretation

This book seeks to bring the ideological debates about human rights and economic development into full view of policymakers, analysts, and researchers who examine policy issues in higher education in the United States. The role of ideology is vitally important in efforts to understanding inequality and the privatization of colleges; moreover, most of the policy literature in this field is largely silent about the role of recent changes in political ideology.[14] In undertaking this task, we take a post-progressive stance that recognizes the fact that the global trajectory complicates policy analysis in education (St. John, 2009a). The "post" aspect of our stance is based on our understanding of the lack of a shared social contract in the global period, while the "progressive" orientation represents the value we place on educational uplift and social progress. We do not assume readers share these values but instead encourage reflection on values and strategies. Although the tools of policy analysis are still extremely useful, the contexts for interpreting policy studies and political actions are different than they were when progressive values of social *and* economic development prevailed. We use the term *the progressive century* to refer to the sustained period from the post-Civil War period and the creation of land-grant universities through the end of the Cold War, during which public investment in higher education was thought to be linked to social progress and economic development.

Policy Analysis

There are many methods of policy analysis, but we focus on how the analysis of problems and cases through two traditions, economic and political, can inform government and institutional decisions in the postmodern period. Both traditions influenced the frameworks developed in this volume.

Human capital theory provided a general framework for cost-benefit and policy analysis in education. Using the logic of human capital,[15] it is possible to estimate the economic value of spending on different types of programs (Levin & McEwan, 2000). This logic turns the analysis of policy options into a set of choices that are rationally analyzed and discussed. This method can include consideration of constraints, incentives, direct and indirect effects, and so forth, all necessary components of crafting both government and institutional policy decisions. This type of research is rare in policy research on higher education (e.g., Paulsen, 2001a, 2001b; St. John & Masten, 1990) because it relies on a form of grand economic theory that is seldom used in higher education studies.

Another tradition used in business education and policy analysis involves case studies.[16] Commonly held assumptions and frames in a field of study can be used to analyze cases and project decisions. Bolman and Deal (1991/1996) illustrate the value of trying out different framing assumptions in analyzing cases and policies. We extend this approach by proposing new frames that have emerged from practices in case study states. Frames provide ways of noting what assumptions are taken for granted in planning and budgeting. Yet as conditions change in states and institutions, it is necessary for policy and strategy to change to keep pace.

Critical–Empirical Approach

The critical–empirical approach to policy analysis involves deconstructing claims or assumptions, examining evidence in relation to those claims, and reconstructing understanding (St. John, 2003, 2007, 2009a). When it is applied to the analysis of policy decisions in states and institutions, this approach can facilitate discourse among analysts and advocates holding different ideologies if there is a willingness to suspend arguments and discuss trends, evidence, and research. With open exchange, it is possible to build new coalitions, a process that has worked well in discussions among Republican and Democrat policy analysts in Indiana regarding school finance issues (Theobald, 2003), early education research (St. John, Loescher, & Bardzell, 2003), and higher education finance (St. John, 2003).[17]

Our approach to policy analysis and research involves examining multiple, and often competing, hypotheses about and rationales for policy decisions, replacing the single-hypothesis approach to policy research and analysis. Research is frequently used to build rationales for reform (St. John & Parsons, 2004); the expectation is that critical–empirical research will discern and test competing claims about a problem and use evidence to rethink and refine the rationales developed to formulate and implement policy.

CONCLUSION

Critical analysis of policy rationales and related evidence is used as the review method in the analytic chapters in this book. In Part I, we provide a broad view of the impact of the ideological shift on policy in higher education (Chapter 2), present our approach to the book (Chapter 3), and examine multiple rationales related to preparation (Chapter 4), access (Chapter 5), and academic success (Chapter 6). These chapters review rationales for policy changes, examine trends in federal policy and related outcomes, and review studies that focused on testing hypotheses. They were constructed to enable readers to make their own judgments about policies and outcomes in these three areas. Part II presents case studies of states that have developed policies related to rationales for reforming higher education. These chapters encourage readers to ponder the strengths and limitations of the approaches used in each state and how they might inform strategies in other states. The states were chosen because of the range of ideologies and policies evident and because of access to information based on our past experiences as researchers. In Part III, we focus on how administrators and researchers can work to inform education reform within states and institutions of higher education. Chapter 13 raises questions about the framing assumptions in use in policy decisions and research. Chapter 14 turns to the problems of the social good and how to promote uplift in a period of constrained taxpayer support for colleges and their students.

Rather than arguing for a single approach or "best practice," we examine the ways in which policymakers, administrators, and professors have endeavored to inform and influence change within existing systems of higher education and how they have advocated for changes in educational systems. Our purpose is to inform judgment and practice rather than to argue for any particular policy or set of policies. In the long run, informed judgment by experts and policymakers is needed to shape the trajectory of higher education in states and to guide institutions through these troubling times.

The first reflective exercise (Text Box 1.1) encourages readers to examine and discuss state and campus context for policy decisions and provides discussion questions for comparing state and institutional contexts. Readers can develop their own cases as they work through the book, using the reflective questions to guide case research. The discussion questions encourage readers to think about the implications of the content in the chapter and related texts to inform their understanding of the role of public policy in higher education.

Text Box 1.1 Questions on Policy Contexts in States and Campuses

1. How do K–12 and higher education, along with financial policies, vary across states?
2. How well aligned are states' policies in K–16 education with federal policies on preparation, access, and college success?
3. How do you think alignment between K–12 and higher education policies varies across states?
4. What are the issues facing your state and campus with respect to:
   a. Preparation (examples: outreach to schools and students, marketing and information dissemination, admissions standards)
   b. Access/Enrollment (examples: student aid, bridge programs, partnerships with high schools)
   c. Academic Success (examples: academic support, options for students who want to change majors, continuity of student aid packages, state funding of degree completion)
5. How have policies on these issues been framed in the past?
   a. Are the policies coherent and linked in logical ways?
   b. Has a guiding philosophy or strategic plan been used to develop these policies or did they just evolve?
6. How has research been used to inform the creation or reformulation of policies in your state?

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